



The Struggles of Brown, Jones and Robinson – Anthony Trollope

Billed as a satire concerning the dishonest advertising and business practices of the day, it tells the tale of an upstart clothing business doomed from the get-go to utter failure. Its senior partner (the elderly Brown, who provides the investment) is far too timid for business. His son-in-law (Jones, who runs the store) is stealing from the till, and the junior partner, Robinson (who writes advertisements for the store) is so obsessed with the idea that advertising alone will drive the business, he uses up every last penny of the capital investment in a series of increasingly ludicrous ad campaigns and publicity stunts.

Thrown into this mix are the two daughters of Brown, who are equally cold and calculating. The elder (married to Jones) is constantly trying to wring money out of the old man, and the younger, Maryanne, spends the entire novel playing off of two potential suitors, Robinson, or Brisket the butcher (one of Trollope's wonderful examples of ironic character naming). (above summary by Steve Forsyth, Texas)

Nevertheless, Trollope shows considerable sympathy for the risks faced by small businessmen (and also notes the vulnerability of writers to over-ready critics); Robinson is to publish his experiences in the Cornhill Magazine, a prominent journal for over 100 years, in which many Victorians serialized novels (including this story). In the final chapter there is a surprising ennoblement of Robinson, and a very positive ending (final comments by Arnold Banner)

Read by Arnold Banner. Proof Listener Nancy Banner. Total running time: 8:07:59

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